

'Last-Minute' Goal Robs Wanderers

BY 'NOVA'

Enfield 2;

Wycombe Wanderers 2

WYCOMBE Wanderers' first Isthmian League encounter with newcomers Enfield will be remembered whenever the two sides meet in future. Not because of the quality of the football. Not because of some unbelievable misses in front of goal by the Enfield forwards. Not even because of the home side's last-minute equaliser. But because of an incident 20 minutes before the end,

The score was level at 1-1 when Enfield attacked but a hefty clearance sent the ball high over the stand. The referee signalled for another ball and the game was restarted. A few minutes later the old ball was returned and brought up behind the Enfield goal. While this was happening Wycombe attacked and shot wide and Enfield goalkeeper Malcolm Mitchell placed the second ball ready to take a goal-kick before realising that the old ball could be brought back into the game.

Mitchell punted the ball to-

wards the trainer's bench and then turned to collect the first ball. Unfortunately for him, his kick travelled straight to right-winger Mick Page. It was obvious, in that second, that most of the players thought Mitchell had taken a goal-kick. Page quickly squared it across the penalty area for Paul Hodges to place an accurate shot well wide of the appealing Mitchell into the net!

In the ensuing uproar Enfield players mobbed referee Mr. E. W. Ruck and the crowd yelled angrily. The home skipper, Bobby Cantwell, persuaded Mr. Ruck to confer with his linesman but after a short discussion he pointed to the centre circle—the goal counted.

BROKEN HEART

What a difference this goal made to both sides! With a home record of 25 games without a draw or a defeat, Enfield visibly crumbled. Their heart had been broken. Yet if they had snapped up just a few of their easy chances they would have been in an invincible position. On at least three occasions their forwards shot wide with only Bunting to beat.

Now, with less than 20 minutes to play, they were a goal down and seemed less and less likely to stop Wycombe from smashing their proud home record.

The Wanderers' two young newcomers to the first team, 18-years-old Billy Gallacher and 21-years-old Mick Page, deputising for the injured Dave Bassett and Len Worley, at last came into their own.

Then suddenly, as the Wycombe defenders moved confidently upfield, a countermove by Enfield ripped down upon Bunting and Broomfield found the goal at his mercy. But from less than seven yards he toe-ended the ball wide of the post!

This incident instead of completely dis-spiriting the home side, acted as a spur. Every player moved purposefully upfield and for five minutes battered away for the equaliser. Then, with the referee looking at his watch, they managed it.

Left-winger Mick Broad swung a high cross into the goalmouth for Roy Thomas to score first time.

The Wanderers could hardly grumble. Most of the luck went

their way. Before the game had even started Enfield were unlucky enough to find themselves without five of their stars—compared with Wycombe's loss of two.

In the first half Wycombe's goal seemed to bear a charmed life. Burridge sent two shots inches wide of the post and Broomfield missed two simple chances.

But the longer the game went on the more certain Wycombe's defence looked.

It was a silly slip by Bunting that enabled Enfield to open their account after 29 minutes. When Roy Thomas moved over to the left flank, a lobbed pass found him unmarked and his shot slipped through Bunting's hands and into the net. Early in the second half a centre from Broomfield cracked against the bar and three forwards all had a chance to reach the ball before Bunting, but failed.

Then, in the 65th minute, Wycombe drew level when Billy Gallacher sent a pass skidding in front of goal. Pullin and Horseman both went for the ball but it was the inside-forward who rammed it into the net.

Five minutes later came the amazing goal-kick incident and then the last-minute equaliser.